

VICTIM PROTECTION  
AND PREVENTION



# *Help After a Terrorist or Extremist Attack*

Information leaflet

[www.hilfe-info.de](http://www.hilfe-info.de)



Federal Ministry  
of Justice





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of Justice



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# *Help for those affected by terrorist or extremist attacks and their relatives*

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No one is prepared for the experience of a terrorist or extremist attack. Terrorist or extremist attacks are not merely directed at individuals – they target our free society as a whole. Accordingly, the state has a special responsibility to provide practical, psychosocial and financial support as quickly as possible.

This information leaflet provides an overview of the support options available, as well as information on the contact points you can turn to immediately after a terrorist or extremist attack or at a later date.

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# 1. Contact points

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You are not alone in this difficult situation. Various advice centres and contact points are available to assist you – e.g. if you have financial problems or other issues as a result of a terrorist or extremist attack. We can also help you find psychosocial or therapeutic help from a professional if you need it (*see also section 2: Psychosocial help*).

The Federation and many of the federal states have set up various contact points to support you after a terrorist or extremist attack.

Details of the Victims' Commissioners and central contact points of the federal states (in German) can be accessed using the following QR code and URL.



[https://bmj.de/kontaktstellen\\_  
bundeslaender](https://bmj.de/kontaktstellen_bundeslaender)

If you live in Brandenburg, you can contact the Federal Government Victims' Commissioner.

## Throughout Germany

### *Federal Government Commissioner for Persons Affected by Terrorist and Extremist Attacks Committed on National Territory*

Federal Ministry of Justice

Mohrenstrasse 37 · 10117 Berlin

E-Mail: [Opferbeauftragter@bmj.bund.de](mailto:Opferbeauftragter@bmj.bund.de)

Tel.: 0800 0009546 (toll-free within Germany)

When calling from abroad: +49 30 18 580 - 8050

→ [www.bmj.de/opferbeauftragter](http://www.bmj.de/opferbeauftragter)

## Additional services

There are also numerous non-governmental victim support organisations in each federal state. These are aimed at specific target groups and can also be contacted for assistance. You can find victim assistance organisations near you in the online Database for Victims of Crime. → [www.odabs.org](http://www.odabs.org)

Experienced counsellors and a wide range of psychosocial support services – also specifically aimed at victims of terrorist attacks – can be found at the victim support organisation WEISSER RING e.V., which is active nationwide → [www.weisser-ring.de](http://www.weisser-ring.de).

You can find extensive information on assistance and support services, as well as legal issues, at → [www.hilfe-info.de](http://www.hilfe-info.de)



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## 2. *Psychosocial support*

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If you have been injured yourself, are close to a person who died or was injured in an attack, have witnessed an attack or were on the scene as a first responder, this may initially provoke strong *feelings and reactions*.

People's reactions to such extraordinary events vary greatly and can also change over time. They can include intense feelings of fear, sadness and helplessness. Some people may have trouble relaxing or getting to sleep, and are tormented by unwanted memories of the event. *Such reactions are normal in the days and weeks following the event.*

Support and understanding from family, friends and colleagues can be particularly helpful in coping with a highly stressful event. In particular, the feeling of not being alone, as well as practical help with everyday tasks, can often be immensely valuable for individuals in an extreme mental state. Familiar surroundings and social connections can provide feelings of stability and security during this difficult time.

However, in some cases the after-effects of the incident are particularly severe, last for longer than around one month, or have an especially distressing effect. In such cases, it can be advisable to seek professional help. There are a number of organisations throughout Germany that can offer you support in this situation.

### *Readily available support services*

Immediately after a terrorist or extremist attack and in the days that follow, your first points of contact will be crisis intervention teams, which are often put together by support organisations, and pastoral care providers at the location where the attack took place. In most cases, you can also contact them via the headquarters of the **fire brigade and rescue services (by phoning 112)** or **the police (110)**.

Outpatient trauma centres provide emergency psychological support to those affected by violent crime and their relatives or bereaved persons, and have typical waiting periods of just a few days. If necessary, psychotherapeutic treatment can be arranged or provided. As outpatient trauma centres are typically connected to psychiatric clinics or hospitals, urgent medical/psychiatric care can also often be ensured. The legal basis for treatment in an outpatient trauma centre is generally Book Fourteen of the German Social Code (SGB XIV). Costs are covered by the responsible pension office. An overview of the outpatient trauma centres in the respective federal states can be found at → [www.hilfe-info.de](http://www.hilfe-info.de) (*Where to get help and advice → Psychological support*).

Additional information on victim compensation can be found in section 3 (Financial assistance) and on the website of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs  
 → [www.bmas.de](http://www.bmas.de) (→ *Social Affairs* → *Social compensation law*).

Perhaps you have been so severely distressed by your experience, injury or loss of a relative that you are unable to assure your own safety and seek out support services on your own. If this applies to you, you or people close to you can contact the emergency services of your local hospital's psychiatric ward. There you will find round-the-clock help. In particularly serious emergencies, you can request help by calling the control centre of the *fire brigade* and *rescue service (112)*.

### *Longer-term support*

Municipalities, cities, and church-based initiatives such as Caritas or Diakonie have crisis services and counselling centres which provide a wide range of psychosocial counselling services. You can find out which crisis services and counselling centres are available in your area by searching online or enquiring in your municipality or town. The contact points listed in section 1 can help you in your search. You can also find specific counselling services on the Internet in the online Database for Victims of Crime: [www.hilfe-info.de](http://www.hilfe-info.de).

### *Bereavement support*

When a person loses someone close to them, they usually experience a profound sense of grief. Grief is a natural step in processing a loss and can often persist for a long time. Bereavement groups, self-help groups or individual grief counsellors can provide you with support and assistance during this time. Information on the various services that can support you during the grieving process (in German) is available from the association *Bundesverband Trauerbegleitung e. V.* → [www.bv-trauerbegleitung.de](http://www.bv-trauerbegleitung.de)  
 E-Mail: [info@bv-trauerbegleitung.de](mailto:info@bv-trauerbegleitung.de)

### *Further information*

Specific information and behavioural recommendations for adults, children and young people on how to cope with distressing events can be found in multilingual leaflets available on the website → [www.bbk.bund.de/psnv-flyer](http://www.bbk.bund.de/psnv-flyer). There, you will also find an information leaflet containing advice for parents on how to talk to their children about terrorist acts.

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### 3. *Financial support*

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Various types of financial support are available for those affected by terrorist or extremist attacks. The following section provides an overview of the benefits you may be able to claim. Help in choosing the right support schemes and in submitting applications can be obtained from the persons and contact points listed at the beginning of this information leaflet in section 1 (Contact points).

#### *a) Hardship compensation*

If you have been physically or mentally injured by a terrorist or extremist act, or if you have lost a close relative, you may be entitled to a special form of financial assistance known as hardship compensation. In order to receive this assistance, you must submit an application.

Contact points, application forms and further information (in German) can be found on the website of the Federal Office of Justice at → [www.bundesjustizamt.de](http://www.bundesjustizamt.de) (→ *Themen* → *Entschädigung* → *Extremismus und Terrorismus*).

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(Federal Office of Justice)

Härteleistungen

53094 Bonn

Tel.: +49 228 99 410 5288

Fax: +49 228 410 5050

E-mail: [opferhilfe@bfj.bund.de](mailto:opferhilfe@bfj.bund.de)

**b) Social benefits**

Book Fourteen of the German Social Code (SGB XIV) grants victims of violent crime – which includes terrorist and extremist offences – a wide range of social benefits, such as:

- provision of medical treatment
- monthly compensation payments for victims, widows and widowers, registered partners, orphans and – in exceptional cases – parents of the victim
- funeral allowance
- benefits to promote participation

Claims under Book Fourteen of the German Social Code (SGB XIV) are reviewed by the competent authorities of the federal state in which you live. These services are provided upon application. There is no time limit for submitting an application, but services do not begin until the month after the application has been filed. If the application is submitted within one year of the injury, services will be provided retroactively as appropriate.

An overview of the pension offices in the federal states is available on the website of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs → [www.bmas.de](http://www.bmas.de) (*Social Affairs* → *Social compensation law* → *Compensation and assistance for victims of violent crime*).

If you have been the victim of a terrorist or extremist offence in Germany but live abroad, you may still be entitled to social compensation in Germany under Book Fourteen of the German Social Code (SGB XIV). To find out more, please contact the specially created Central Contact Point below at the Federal Agency for Social Security:

***Bundesamt for Soziale Sicherung***

***(Federal Agency for Social Security)***

Bundesstelle für Soziale Entschädigung

Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 38 · 53113 Bonn

Tel.: +49 228 619 - 0

E-mail: [poststelle@bas.bund.de](mailto:poststelle@bas.bund.de)

→ [www.bundesamtsozialesicherung.de](http://www.bundesamtsozialesicherung.de)

***c) Benefits under the statutory accident insurance scheme***

(Accident insurance funds – *Unfallkassen* and employers' liability insurance associations – *Berufsgenossenschaften*)

If you were acting in a professional capacity, travelling with a school class or university seminar group, or trying to help others after a terrorist or extremist attack and were injured in the process, you may be entitled to benefits under the statutory accident insurance scheme. This could include coverage of treatment costs and costs of medical rehabilitation, as well as payment of a pension.

People who provide help (first aiders and emergency helpers) are insured by the accident insurance fund responsible for the area where the attack took place.

Public sector employees and certain volunteer workers are insured by the accident insurance funds responsible for their organisation (i.e. those of the municipalities, federal states, or the Federation). If kindergarten children, school pupils or students have experienced a terrorist or extremist attack while participating in an educational activity, this responsibility lies with the accident insurance fund of the region where the school or higher education institute is situated. People who were working at the site of the attack

or were on their way to work should contact their respective employers' liability insurance association (except employees of the public service).

An overview of the accident insurance funds and employers' liability insurance associations can be found on the website of the association Deutsche Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung (DGUV) at → [www.dguv.de/en/](http://www.dguv.de/en/) (→ *Organisation and structure* → *Tasks*).

To find out more about possible benefits and which accident insurance agency is the right one for you, you can call the DGUV's helpline at the following *toll-free number*: **0800 60 50 40 4**.

#### *d) Additional financial support*

If a terrorist or extremist attack was carried out using a motor vehicle, you may be eligible for compensation under the Compulsory Insurance Act (*Pflichtversicherungsgesetz*). In such cases, you can file your claims with *Verkehrsofferhilfe e. V.* (VOH):

#### *Verkehrsofferhilfe e. V.*

Wilhelmstraße 43/43 G · 10117 Berlin

E-mail: [voh@verkehrsofferhilfe.de](mailto:voh@verkehrsofferhilfe.de)

Tel.: +49 30 2020 5858

Fax: +49 30 2020 5722

Depending on the incident, additional financial support may be available. Information on this case-dependent assistance can be found on the website of the Federal Government Victims Commissioner.

[www.bmj.de/opferbeauftragter](http://www.bmj.de/opferbeauftragter)



*This information leaflet is updated regularly.*

*The latest digital version is available at:*

*→ [www.bmj.de/opferbeauftragter](http://www.bmj.de/opferbeauftragter)*

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### *Publication data*

This publication is produced by the Federal Ministry of Justice as part of its public relations work. It is available free of charge and is not for sale.

#### **Published by:**

Federal Ministry of Justice  
Referat Öffentlichkeitsarbeit und Bürgerdialog  
(Division for public relations and citizens' dialogue)  
11015 Berlin  
[www.bmj.de](http://www.bmj.de)

#### **Design:**

neues handeln AG

#### **Printed by:**

MKL Druck GmbH & Co. KG, Ostbevern

#### **Current as of:**

December 2023

#### **This publication can be ordered from:**

[www.bmj.de](http://www.bmj.de)





#### **Federal Government Publication Office:**

Postfach 481009  
18132 Rostock  
Tel.: +49 30 18 272 272 1  
Fax: +49 30 18 10 272 272 1





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